

Jacob's last wishes

47:28 Now lived Jacob in the land of Egypt, a total of seventeen years.

[The days of Jacob]—the years of his life—totaled seven years plus forty and a hundred years (*i.e.* 147).

29 [When the time drew near]—[the days of Israel]—[for him to die], [he sent for his son]—[he called for] Joseph, and said to him, “[If I pray], [I have found favor] [in your eyes], pray put your hand under my thigh (as a pledge of loyalty), and deal with me with kindness and truth: pray do not bury me in Egypt.

30 [Rather let me lie down] with my fathers. [Take me up] from Egypt, [and bury me] in their tomb.”

[And Joseph said], “[I will indeed] do as you have spoken”

31 [And Jacob said], “You must swear to me. So he swore to him. Then bowed Israel at the head of the bed.

Jacob adopts Joseph's two sons and blesses them

48:1 [And it happened] after [these things] had occurred: [it was told] to Joseph,

“Come see, your father is sick.” [And he set out] taking [his two sons] with him, Manasseh and Ephraim.

2 It was reported to Jacob, [using these words], “[Look and see]: your son Joseph is coming to see you.”

[So summoning his strength], Israel sat up on the bed.

3 And said Jacob to Joseph, “*El Shaddai* appeared to me in Luz, in the land of Canaan, and gave a blessing to me.

4 [And God spoke], [saying to me]: ‘Behold, [I will make you fruitful] [and increase you], [and will make you] into a host of peoples.

‘I will bestow upon you [this country]—[this very land]—to your seed that comes after you, an inheritance for the ages.’

5 [And from this time on], [your two sons] that were born to you in the land of Egypt [before I] [appeared to you] in Egypt—[to me they belong]: Ephraim and Manasseh, just like Reuben and Simeon, will belong to me.

6 [But your progeny] whom you will bear *after* them, to you will belong. They will be included [under the name] [of their brothers]—[thus they shall be called], [for the purpose of their inheritance].

48:7 [Due to what happened to me] [when I was coming] [from Paddam Aram], [that's when she died]—lost to me was Rachel in the land of Canaan [along the way], when there was still a stretch of land left, to come to Ephrat. [I buried her] there on the road to Ephrat, that now is called Beth-Lechem.”

8 When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, “[Who are these?”]

9 [And said] Joseph to his father, “My sons these are that were given to me by God in this place.”

[And Israel said], [end aliyah] “Bring them now to me, [that I may bless them].”

10 And the eyes of Israel were heavy with age. He was not able to see.

[He brought them] close [to himself]. He gave them a kiss and embraced them.

11 [Then said] Israel to Joseph, “That I would see your face, I did not expect. But now, [here it is being] [shown to me] by *Elohim*,—and here are even your children.”

12 [And he took them]—[Joseph took out] the boys from between his knees. And he bowed with his face to the ground.

13 And then [took Joseph] [the two boys]: Ephraim [with his right hand]—to the left of Israel—
—and Manassah with his left hand—to the right of Israel, [and he brought them] to him (to Israel).

14 [And he reached out] Israel took his right hand and placed it on the head of Ephraim—the one who was younger—
[and his left hand] on the head of Manasseh, thus crossing his arms, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.

15 Then Israel blessed Joseph by saying, “[It was *Elohim*]—[the God of whom] there walked my fathers [before Him]—Abraham and Isaac; this was *Elohim* who shepherded me [from my inception] until this day.

16 [As to the angel] who redeemed me [from all evil]: [may he give a blessing] to the boys. [May there be called], through them, [my name], along with the names of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac. [end aliyah] May they spawn a great number in the midst of the earth.”

17 [When it was seen] [by Joseph] [the laying of hands]—[his father placing] [his right hand] on the head of Ephraim, it seemed bad in his eyes. [He held up] [the hand of his father], to turn [the hand away] from the head of Ephraim, to the head of Manasseh.

18 [And he spoke]: [Joseph said these words] to his father, “Not *that* way, my father. For *this* is the firstborn. Put your hand [on *his* head].”

19 He objected: [his father refused] and said, “I know this, my son—[of course I know]. But he too will be a people; he too will be great. [And indeed], [his brother, the young one], will be greater than he, and his descendants will be enough to make nations.”

48:20 And Jacob blessed them [that day]—[on that very day]—by saying: “[It will be through you] [that they will bless]—[the people Israel]—as follows: ‘[May you be made] by God like Ephraim and Manasseh.’ ” Thus he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

21 [Then said] Israel to Joseph, “Mark now: I am about to die. Know that *Elohim* [will be with you], and will bring you back to the land of your fathers.

22 [And as for me], [I am bestowing] [now upon you] a portion over and above your brothers, which I did take from the hand of the Amorite [end aliyah] [by means of my sword] [and with my bow].”

Jacob's blessings to each of his twelve sons

49:1 Then called Jacob for his sons. [He said *this* to them]:

“[Gather together] that I [may tell you] [what will occur]—what will befall you in later days.

2 Gather around and listen, O sons of Jacob, and hearken to Israel your father.

3 **Reuben**: my first-born are you, my might, first-fruit of my vigor, foremost in pride, and foremost in strength.

4 Unstable as water, you no longer excel, [for you went up] on the bed of your father. Thus you defiled it: my couch he went up on.

5 **Simeon and Levi**, the brothers: Instruments of violence [are their tools of trade].

6 [Into their council]—will not go my soul! [With their company]—[may not be joined] my *kavod*. For in their rage, they murdered people. [For their pleasure], [they crippled an ox].

7 Accursed is their fury, that is so fierce, and their rage, that is so cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

8 [Now **Judah**]: you are praised by your brothers. Your hand is on the neck of your foes. They will bow down before you, the sons of your father.

9 The cub of a lion, is Judah. From the prey, my son, you have risen. He crouches, [and he lies down] [just like a lion], [and like a lion], who dares to arouse him?.

10 [There shall not pass] the scepter from Judah, [nor the staff of command] from between his feet, until they bring him tribute, [and to him] comes submission of nations.

11 He loads down with a grapevine, his donkey; [with a vine branch], his donkey's colt. He washes with wine, his clothing; [in the blood of grapes], his robe.

12 Cloudy his eyes are, with wine; whiter his teeth are, than milk.

49:13 **Zebulun**: on the shore of the sea, he dwells. He shall be a haven for ships. His border [shall reach Sidon].

14 **Issachar** is a donkey, strong-boned, [stretched out] between the boundaries.

15 He saw [a resting-place]—that it was good, and the land—that it was pleasant.
So he bowed his shoulders [for the load], and became [a laboring worker].

16 **Dan** will judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 May Dan be a serpent on the road, a viper by the path, who bites the horse's heels, so the rider falls off backward.

18 [end aliyah] For your deliverance I wait, YHWH.

19 **Gad**: raiders (*gedud*) [will raid him], but he will raid at their heel.

20 **Asher**: rich is his food, and he provides [the delights of a king].

21 **Naphtali** is a deer running fast, [that brings forth] [fawns that are lovely]. or: ... He delivers [words of beauty]

22 A young wild ass is **Joseph**—a wild ass by a spring. Like wild colts [on a hillside].

23 Bitterly [they assailed him]. They harried him, like archers.

24 [Yet emplaced] firmly [was his bow], [nimble and strong] were his forearms: [made strong by the hands] [of the Mighty One] of Jacob, through the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel.

25 From the God of your father—[the one who assists you], and from *Shaddai*, the one [who blesses you],
with blessings of heaven above, with blessings of the deep, lying beneath, blessings of the breast and the womb.

26 The blessings [of your father] have excelled the blessings of my parents, lasting as long as the hills everlasting.
May they rest on the head of Joseph, [end aliyah] on the crown of the elect of his brothers.

27 **Benjamin** is a wolf [that tears to pieces]: in the morning [he devours] the prey, and in the evening he divides the spoil.”

28 [All these] were the tribes of Israel, twelve in number, [and these were the words] that were spoken
[to them] by their father, [when he blessed them]. [He gave to each one] his own parting words, and thus did he bid them farewell.

Jacob's last moments and his death

49:29 He then [instructed them], saying [to them], “[I am about] to be gathered to my people. You must bury me with my fathers there in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite.

30 [This is the cave] that [is in the field] [of Makhpelah], bordering Mamre, in the land of Canaan. [This was the place] [purchased by Abraham], [along with the field]. [He purchased it from] Ephron the Hittite, [as a site for burial].

31 This [is where they interred] [both Abraham] and Sarah his wife. There also, is buried Isaac, [along with] Rebecca his wife. And this is where I buried Leah.

32 [This was the purchase] [of a plot of land], and the cave that is in it, from the sons of Heth.”

33 [When he was through]—[when Jacob had finished] instructing his sons, he drew up his feet onto the bed. He expired, and was gathered to his people.

Jacob's funeral

50:1 At this, Joseph flung himself on the face of his father. He wept over him, and kissed him.

2 [He gave orders]: Joseph charged his servants, the physicians to embalm his father. (Thus embalmed by the physicians) was Israel.

3 [And it took them] forty days, [because in fact], such is the term of the days of embalming.

[And the people] [mourned for him]—the Egyptians—for seventy days.

4 [When this had passed]—the days of mourning, [there spoke] Joseph to the household of Pharaoh, as follows:

“[If I pray], [I have found] favor in your eyes, [please speak to him]: in the hearing of Pharaoh, [tell him this]:

5 ‘[My father made me swear]—he adjured me [by saying], “Behold, [I am about] to die:

[In my grave]—the one [that was dug] by me in the land of Canaan—there [you must bury me].

’[Therefore now], [let me go up, I pray], to bury my father, [and I will return].’

6 [Responding to him], [Pharaoh said], “[Go up as you say], and bury your father, just as he adjured you.”

50:7 So he went up—Joseph—to bury his father, and there went up with him
all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, [in fact all the elders] of the land of Egypt,
8 and the whole household of Joseph, his brothers and his father's house.
[All that remained] [were the young children], their sheep, and their cattle. [These were left behind] in the region of Goshen.
9 There went up [with him], chariots and horsemen. The entire company, was a large one indeed.
10 [They came to] Gorem HaAtad (Bramble Barn), which lies beyond the Jordan, [and there they mourned] [with lamentations]
great and solemn, indeed. [And Joseph observed] [for his father], mourning, for seven days.
11 [When they witnessed this]—[the residents] of the land of Canaan, [when they saw the mourning]
in Gorem HaAtad, they said this: "They are mourning so deeply—those Egyptians."
[And because of this], they called [the name of the place] 'Avel Mitzraim' (Egypt's mourning), which lies across the Jordan.
12 So they did—Jacob's sons, [did for him] just as he had commanded them.
13 [They took him]—[his sons] [carried him] to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave in the field of Makhpelah,
since [it had been bought]—Abraham had purchased the field [as a burial site].
[He had bought] from Ephron the Hittite, this place, opposite Mamre.
14 Then returned Joseph to Egypt—he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him, to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

From the death of Jacob to that of Joseph

15 [When they saw]—Joseph's brothers—that their father was dead, they said, "What if he is holding a grudge—Joseph—
and means to pay us back, [in return] for all of the evil that we dealt out to him."
16 [So they sent this message] to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave instructions before his death, and said,
17 'Say this to Joseph: [I beseech you], forgive [I pray that you will forgive], [the offenses]
of your brothers, and their sins, for they did evil to you.' So now forgive I pray the crime of the servants of the God of your father."
And Joseph wept as they were speaking to him.

50:18 Then came [the brothers themselves], [and flung themselves] before him. They said, “Here we are before you, as your slaves.”
 19 [Then he spoke] [these words to them]—[Joseph said]: “[Be not afraid]. [For could it be], that in the place of God—[am I]?
 20 [But you]—you planned to do to me, evil,
 but God intended it for good, in order [to insure], [end aliyah] as we see this day, the survival of many people.
 21 So now, don’t be afraid. [I myself] will provide for you and for your children.” Thus he comforted them, and he spoke to their hearts.
 22 And remained Joseph in Egypt: himself, and the house of his father. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years.
 23 And saw Joseph through Ephraim: sons [of the third generation].
 Furthermore, the sons of Machir [son of Manasseh] were born on Joseph’s knees.
 24 Then said Joseph to his brothers, “I [am about to die]. *Elohim* [will most surely] take [notice of you], and will bring you up from this land,
 [and take you to the land]—the land [that God did swear] to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”
 25 [He made them swear]—Joseph adjured *B’nei Yisrael*, saying this:
 “[When God does] [take notice]—when *Elohim* [remembers you]—you must bring up my bones from here.
 26 And so [died Joseph] at one hundred ten [years of age]. They [embalmed him] [end sepher melody] and laid him in a coffin in Egypt.

Chazak, chazak, ve nitchazeik.

Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh or yetiv kadma or pashta gersh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, gersh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh (or: azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
⌞Renew our days⌟	⌞She weeps bitterly⌟	⌞a fire-offering to God⌟

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalshelet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (viz. cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a distinctive melody—I add extra syllables to fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “God” or “Adonai”.

Warning on the Hebrew text: The text I use for the English trope system is from Aryeh Kaplan; the Hebrew text I display is from Wikisource. Occasionally (but rarely) a phrase will use different tropes in the two systems.

The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)
Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)
The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)
JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)
Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)
Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)
The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
The New King James Bible (1982)